

# Networks: An Online Journal for Teacher Research

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## Editorial Introduction

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An On-line Journal  
for Teacher Research

## Editorial Introduction

**Catherine Compton-Lilly, University of Wisconsin Madison**

Welcome to Volume 16, Number 1 of *Networks: An Online Journal for Teacher Research*. I am thrilled to introduce you to another volume featuring the voices of educators. This issue includes articles focused on learning centers in first grade classrooms, mentoring teacher researchers, and the potential of reflective journaling for preservice teachers as well as a review of *The Networked Teacher: How New Teachers Build Social Networks for Professional Support* by Kira Baker-Doyle.

In *Chaos in the Classroom: Center Learning in a 1st Grade Setting*, Lanaux, Vice, and Fasching-Varner share the work of two student teachers and a university professor as they explore possibilities for using learning centers in a first grade classroom. Highlighting the careful planning of their cooperating teacher, the student teachers, Courtney and Kristen, report positive effects on their students' enjoyment, social relationships, and levels of cooperation. They also note that center time "frees up" the teacher allowing her to pull out a small group of students to reinforce various skills." This article not only highlights these important findings, but also provides advice for creating and implement learning centers for young children.

Schulte turns our attention to *The Preparation of Mentors Who Support Novice Teacher Researchers*. The Rural Teacher Residency Program provided a 12-month pathway program providing teachers with initial special or general elementary education credentials or a master's degree for candidates who are interested in working in high-need rural schools. This program is designed to introduce teacher candidates to teacher research experiences. As teachers move through the program, they identify research questions, collect data, and learn about teaching in rural schools. This article highlights the

actions that were taken to support novice teacher researchers by examining resources that supported teachers, the process of introducing teachers to conducting research, and the revisions that were made as the program entered its second year of operation. As Schulte reports, "Introducing practicing teachers to the process of action research and institutionalizing its use in teacher preparation programs can lead to 'locally-sponsored systemic reform'" (Zeichner, 2009, p. 18).

In *Don't Waste My Time; Exploring the Reflective Journaling Requirement in the Student Teaching Experience*, Spiker explores her practices as a teacher educator. In particular, she revisits the affordances of reflective journaling as a component of the student teaching experience. At Spiker's university, the students are required to reflect upon their teaching experience through journal writing. As she reports, "Students tend to view journaling with dread. They see their journal as busy work and some report fabricating entries simply to have something on paper." In order to explore these issues, Spiker surveyed the student teachers and worked with a focus group of five students to explore the use of an interactive online platform (Edmodo.com) to create a place to dialogue with other students and to purposefully reflect on their teaching. Spiker concludes that "In order for [journaling] to be meaningful it must be flexible according to student needs and preferences." She argues that adding opportunities for dialogue through journaling created the "potential for deeper growth."

Finally, Porath provides us with an intriguing review of *The Networked Teacher: How New Teachers Build Social Networks for Professional Support* by Kira Baker-Doyle. This review

highlights insights about the power of social networking for educators interested in improving

their practices and engaging their school communities.